



Delaware
Department of Health
& Social Services

Strategic Plan

Fiscal Years 2007 through 2009

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DHSS Mission & Priorities

The mission of Delaware's Department of Health & Social Services is to improve the quality of life for Delaware's citizens by promoting health and well-being, fostering self-sufficiency, and protecting vulnerable populations. Our priorities are to maximize personal and family independence and to be a self-correcting organization working to keep pace with changing client needs and a changing service delivery environment.

Environmental Scan

The Department's environmental scanning process involves an assessment of the broad themes, trends and issues that are expected to have a major impact on the Department.

Demographic Trends

The 2000 national census provides a detailed picture of the demographic trends in Delaware:

- ◆ From 2000-2003, Delaware's population grew 4.3% to 817,491, compared to 3.3% growth nationally. The population is projected to reach 853,982 by 2020, with the annual growth rate in Sussex County expected to be higher than the rate in Kent and New Castle Counties.
- ◆ Delaware's 60 and older population is expected to grow from 134,400 in 2000 to 153,578 in 2005, an increase of 14.3%. The growth rate in Kent (17.5%) and Sussex (18.4%) counties is expected to be considerably higher than in New Castle County (11%). Consequently, elderly persons will soon outnumber children in Delaware. This trend will continue as life expectancy continues to increase, according to the National Center for Health Statistics.
- ◆ Delaware's Hispanic or Latino population has increased by 136% statewide from 1990 to 2000, many of whom are non-English speaking. For the first time, Hispanic population growth nationally was fueled by births more than immigration.

Economic Trends

The economy will always be a major factor affecting DHSS services, since state revenues are highly sensitive to economic conditions. There is both good news and bad news for Delaware on the economic horizon over the next few years:

- ◆ According to DEFAC, during the past year, the economy strengthened and revenues increased.
- ◆ Delaware may be at risk for large job cuts when MBNA and Bank of America combine their credit card operations as part of Bank of America's \$35 billion buyout of Delaware's largest private employer.
- ◆ The possible introduction of gambling in Maryland and Pennsylvania could have a serious impact on state revenues.

Policy Impacts

New legislation, policies and other requirements will continue to impact DHSS service provision:

- ◆ Medicare prescription drug coverage (Part D), due to begin in January 2006, will impact current state prescription assistance programs. The so-called

'clawback' provision will require states with existing pharmaceutical assistance programs to contribute towards the cost of Medicare Part D.

Social Trends

On-going social trends affect numerous DHSS Divisions:

- ◆ Because of the mobility in our society and the number of women in the workforce, the availability of informal caregivers is limited for many DHSS clients, both young and old. Consequently respite services and caregiver supports will remain a high priority. Full day kindergarten will also likely influence utilization of current child care programs which are in need of rate increases.

Health Trends

This field is currently experiencing a period of unprecedented change:

- ◆ According to the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), the medical inflation rate is at 7.7%, outpacing overall economic growth by nearly 3 percentage points, while drug prices are increasing at a higher rate according to the AARP.
- ◆ Pharmaceutical advances together with increasing prescription drug utilization will impact on both treatment and financing strategies.
- ◆ State Medicaid spending is projected to jump 11.7 percent annually, according to the Kaiser Commission on Medicaid.
- ◆ Cancer rates will continue to draw close attention, with particular reference to prevention efforts. The smoking ban has been one especially successful strategy, although enforcement issues will need to be overcome.
- ◆ Infant mortality and low birth weight concerns have become a priority again. In 2001 Delaware ranked 50th in the nation in infant mortality, with 107 deaths per 10,000 births. Nationwide, the rate was 68 deaths for every 10,000 births in 2001.
- ◆ Environmental health issues such as water and air quality continue to be major concerns.
- ◆ The incidence of disability in the older population is continuing to decline, especially among African Americans. Of particular concern, however, is the increasing percentage of nursing home residents with Alzheimer's disease and other dementias.
- ◆ Zoonotic and other transmissible diseases are an issue of increasing importance and the current upward trend is likely to continue.
- ◆ Advances in behavioral health pharmacological interventions and improved community supports are expected to continue to reduce the demand for institutional care.

Infrastructure Trends

There are a wide variety of identified infrastructure trends that will impact the Department's activities in the years ahead:

- ◆ Due to the age and condition of many DHSS facilities, capital needs will have to be carefully prioritized. Critical code violations or severe physical

deterioration of facilities affecting life and safety will require immediate attention, especially if they have an effect on patient care or licensing.

- ◆ Trends in the area of information technology include the continued rapid growth of the Internet (particularly the e-Government component) and the need to replace DHSS' old systems (e.g., DCSE system, DSAAPD TAP system).

Workforce Trends

Maintaining a well-trained workforce is becoming a more complex issue due to a variety of inter-related factors:

- ◆ The number of staff near or at retirement age in the Department is growing, especially in key administrative positions.
- ◆ State agencies and contractors who provide vital services to Department clients are finding it difficult to hire and retain staff with the required skills. This is particularly evident in the field of nursing and related direct care fields.
- ◆ Diversity issues will continue to be highlighted given the nature of the Department's business and its clientele.

Service System Trends

Changes to the service system will improve the ability of the Department to meet the changing needs of its customers:

- ◆ The Department's streamlining initiative has resulted in the creation of a new Division of Medicaid and Medical Assistance.
- ◆ The Division of Services for Aging and Adults with Physical Disabilities will expand Medicaid waivers for Acquired Brain Injury and Attendant Services.
- ◆ The Division of Developmental Disabilities Services' new uniform assessment-based reimbursement methodology will allow funds to follow the consumer rather than remain in static service settings. This will allow more equitable payments to service providers that deliver bundled services.